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THE WIFE OF "'OSTLER JOE,"

A TRAVESTY,

BY

RUTH WALDON,

AUTHOR OF

"Revised Versions," "Trixanna Trude," "Puddleton and Its Big Toads," etc.

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The Wife of "'Ostler Joe."

A TRAVESTY.

By Ruth Waldon.

I fain would pluck a flower, but none was ever known to grow
Upon the grave of "Annie Brown," the wife of "'Ostler Joe."
It was in a lonely corner, and no stone was at its head,
Although, at least, a dozen years poor Annie had been dead.

But her rest was just as peaceful without flowers red or white,
And she never lured a single soul from doing what was right.
She did not need a stone to tell she had been an honest wife,
For a dozen children, more or less, bore witness to the strife.

* * * * * * * *

'Twas a hot day in the summer, and his face was very red,
And sweat in drops, stood on his brow, when Joe did Annie wed.
He wore a bright blue neck-tie and a collar stiff and new,
And Annie was dressed gorgeously in yellow, red and blue.

Joe had never been called handsome, but he did not seem to care;
Annie would have been a beauty but for freckles and red hair.
They'd a cottage near the stables—kept some pigs and owned a cow—
Where they earned an honest living by the sweating of the brow.

"Sped the months and came a baby," and they named him "Little Joe;"
Next came Anu and Jane and Johnnie, Tom and Ned, all in a row.
Joe kept rubbing down the "'osses," gave them extra clover hay
In honor of each baby, but he found it wouldn't pay.

Had to celebrate too often, for his joys came very thick,
To keep up such extravagance would take a goodly rick;
He explained it to the "'osses," and they gave a kindly neigh—
We accept your good intentions, was just what they seemed to say.

And the children they were rosy; they looked just like Ann and Joe;
All the people in the parish fifty times had told them so.
Passed the years and came the babies, keeping tally very near;
Now and then they gained a little by two coming in a year.

Happy was that little cottage for the doctor passed them by,
Neither pills nor paregoric did Joe ever have to buy.
Thunder storms in all their fury were as nothing to their noise,
And a cyclone was a zephyr when compared to Joseph's boys.

If a gentleman did ever dare this cottage door to pass,
Both dust and pebble stones they'd fling, besides they'd give him "sass;"
Then they'd call the "pretty gemplum," when he stopped they'd yell out "rats"—
All the "gemplum" in the village learned to know the saucy brats.

In the bar-room of the "Magpie" they did learn much "classic lore;"
They usually did graduate about the age of four * * *
Came a bar-maid to the "Magpie;" they imported her from town
With a fancy frilled white apron and a stylish city gown:

Hair as glossy as the raven and her teeth a pearly row;
Whether they were real or boughten she did never let them know.
Her laugh, it was so musical, like silver bells did ring,
Sounded like the social glasses with their merry ting-a-ling.

"Lurly Heights," she couldn't find 'em on the best and plainest maps,
But it wasn't much worth knowing what she didn't know of taps.
She never learned the siren's song, but 'twould almost make you cry
When she sat upon an ale-keg singing Comin' *for* the "Rye."

The song she sung allured more men to destruction every week,
Than all the songs that the siren's sang from Lurly's tallest peak.
Higher rose her fame and wages, while she laughed and sung and smiled—
Crowded was the "Magpie's" bar-room and higher the beer kegs piled.

From customer to customer quickly passed the foaming ale;
All her rivals in the business fairly trembled and turned pale.
Of their very oldest patrons scarcely one came any more,
While the beer and ale got sour and they had to close the door.

'Twas the very same old story, often told and o'er again;
'Twas a handsome, clever woman and a lot of silly men.
Joe, the 'Ostler, was no better than the rest before the bar,
He was "mashed" upon the bar-maid and she *made* a "family jar."

'Twas this talking to the "'osses" that, at last, gave Joe away;
For he talked about the bar-maid while he fed them extra hay—
"Her was so fine an' 'ansome—'ad a 'igh bred filly's pace;
Fresh red clover in the summer wasn't sweeter than her face.

Annie was too fat and clumsy, and her 'air, it was so red;
When her walked her kind o' waddled," was what 'Ostler Joseph said.
As he told it to the "'osses" the grey filly shook her ear—
As if to say, "look out, old boy, there'll be trouble soon, I fear."

He was talking to the horses, though he talked
quite low and soft,
Annie, she was hunting hen's eggs in the hay mow
in the loft,
So, she just kept still and listened, just like any
woman can
When she finds she's quite "surrounded" a base
recreant man.

Home came Joe that night to supper and he met
his wrathy wife,
And he learned the bitter lesson he remembered all
his life.
She burst on him like a fury from the little back
bed-room—
Hissing through the air in circles swung the
handle of the broom.

"When her walks her kind o' waddles, does her?"
irate Annie said,
And she laid the broom-stick level on his shoulders,
back and head.
And he told it to the "'osses" and they whinnered
very low;
But the filly's eyes did twinkle; seemed to say, "I
told you so."

Then he knelt down by the "'osses," and he
thought he'd try to pray,
But he knew he "didn't ought to," so not a word
could find to say;
Something told him he deserved to pass under the
chast'ning rod,
And he knew it was the broom-stick that had made
him think of God.

* * * * * * * *

That's the lesson I fain would teach by this, while
brooms are made for sweeping dust,
They come handy in emergencies when women lose
their trust,
When wielded by a valiant arm, 'twill convince
men on the spot
That their wives are good and beautiful, if it don't,
they'll make it hot.

"REVISED VERSIONS," a Poetical Parallel; also "Fragments of Thought" and "Trixanna Trude," a Society Epic, by RUTH WALDON. In the hands of the Publisher.

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